
Introduction

The State of Montana started supporting library services in 1929, when the State Library Extension Commission was created by an act of the Legislative Assembly. The Commission's job was to develop libraries in Montana, but it wasn't until 1945 that the Legislature appropriated money to finance its work. Today, Montana is home to more than one hundred public libraries, providing a range of information services to citizens free of charge.

Libraries are at the heart of sustainable communities because of the hard work and commitment of people like you. Over the years, public library trustees have put in long hours to promote public library services. In turn, they have had the satisfaction of seeing their libraries grow and their communities benefit from enhanced lifelong learning and a free exchange of ideas.

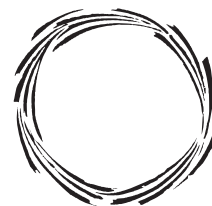
The *Montana Public Library Trustee Handbook* will help you continue that vital work.

In addition to describing your roles and responsibilities as a trustee, the handbook provides sample documents, checklists and other resources you can turn to when you need information about specific topics. It also provides valuable information for your director. Because trustees and the director must work together to provide quality information services to the community, cooperation and teamwork are emphasized throughout.

Treat the handbook as a tool. For example, you will want to have your handbook available for reference at each Board meeting. And when you retire from the Board, you can pass your handbook on to the next trustee.

The loose-leaf format makes it easy to update the handbook, replacing pages as new information becomes available. You can also insert related materials such as your Board's bylaws, policies, meeting minutes and latest planning document to create a comprehensive reference resource. Use the topic dividers, glossary, index and references throughout the text to help locate specific information quickly when you need it.

The *Montana Public Library Trustee Handbook* is a reference you will return to again and again. But please remember that it is not a substitute for working closely with your community, professional library organizations, other libraries and the Montana State Library. Making use of all of these



Montana Public
Library Trustee
Handbook

*Your trustee
handbook
is a tool.
Keep it on
hand for easy
reference.*

resources will help you better understand and meet your community's needs for information services.

Acknowledgements

This handbook is an update of the 2001 *Montana Public Library Trustee Handbook*, published by Montana State Library.

Montana State Library is grateful to the members of the 2001 Trustee Handbook Review Committee for donating their time and expertise during preparation of the original handbook. These members include:

Joan Bishop, Trustee, Lewis and Clark Library, Helena
Steve Gannon, Former Trustee, Choteau County Library
Eleanor Gray, Former Trustee, Miles City Public Library
Elizabeth Kearney, Former Director, West Yellowstone Public Library
Gloria Langstaff, Director, Bitterroot Public Library, Hamilton
Sheila Lee, Director, Sheridan County Library, Plentywood
Steve Owens, Trustee, William K. Kohrs Memorial Library, Deer Lodge

Montana State Library also thanks:

- Idaho State Library for allowing Montana to borrow freely from the *Idaho Library Trustee Manual* (1996)
- State Library of Iowa for allowing Montana to borrow freely from the *Iowa Library Trustee's Handbook 1998*
- New York's Mid-Hudson Library System, New Hampshire's Newport Regional Library and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction for permission to reproduce their director evaluation forms
- Maryland, South Carolina, Illinois, Minnesota and others for sharing information from their trustee manuals
- Cain Consulting Group for allowing Montana to adapt material from *The Board Team Handbook: A Complete Guide to Boardmanship Basics for the Board Team of the 90's*
- Debra Wilcox Johnson, Johnson & Johnson Consulting, Waunakee, Wis., for permission to draw from her materials.

This handbook was prepared as an educational resource and should not be used as a substitute for legal advice. The publication was funded in part with federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant funds. These funds are administered through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the Montana State Library Commission.